

SCHOLA LATINA BOSTONIENSIS



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the Boston Latin School, past and present

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MULTIPLES OF THREE

by Sarah Lydon

Professor Carrisford stepped out of the rattling bus, carefully balancing his briefcases to keep them from bumping clumsily against his knees as he began to walk. The broiling African sun beat down cruelly on his head.

"My whole bloody head is going to sizzle up at this rate! I must buy a hat," he thought angrily. "I hate the sun. I hate bloody Cairo! Why they sent *me* of all people to write a report on this foolish tomb . . . Let the thing rot, I say. I certainly do not relish wasting my time poking around in worthless mummies!" He stomped furiously down the busy street, narrowly avoiding a collision with a taxi.

"This chap wasn't even a king; in fact he wasn't anything important at all! A bloody noble who worshipped cats. 'Noble,' indeed. And *curses*, no less! Didn't Carter and Carnarvon have ruddy rum luck. All that gold. . ." He laughed bitterly. "Had it good when *they* were alive, that's all I say." He thought back to that morning when he had stepped into the burial chamber, a small, drab room occupied only by a single coffin, plus the twelve small ones, of course, each one less than a foot high. With trembling fingers he had opened one of these, eagerly anticipating a baby's body, wrapped in jewels and golden trinkets. His anger and disappointment when the shrivelled body inside was revealed to be nothing more than a cat's were acute, to say the least.

"A cat!" he had cried. "A *bloody* cat!" Quickly he had ordered his native assistant to take the horrible things away, exclaiming bitterly when the man protested — "Well I'm afraid that I can find no use for them at all, my man, no use at all, whether he could or not!" But the native had politely refused to touch the feline mummies, explaining quietly that they were cursed and he did not wish to die or go mad.

And so Carrisford had angrily disposed of the embalmed bodies himself. "There's no bloody way you're going to find me carting twelve worthless. . . *cat* mummies around Africa, not to mention going through the trouble of getting them through customs!" he had spluttered angrily to his client on the phone.

But that wasn't the real reason. "Bloody curses! Bloody cats!" He shuddered convulsively, for he remembered the split second of confusion and fear he had experienced when for a brief moment as he removed the last, crumbling yellowed strip of cloth from the shrivelled little body, he had seen the three-thousand year old corpse as a living, breathing cat, with a mottled, reddish-brown coat and great, orange eyes that loomed like glowing pumpkins. But the vision had disappeared in a moment, leaving him shaken and feeling ill.

Carrisford erased the horrible memory from his mind, concentrating instead on visions of a hot, or more likely cold, bath back at the hotel.

He trudged wearily through the revolving doors, swearing horribly as his left foot came into direct and painful contact with one of the panels. He stormed angrily through the lobby, muttering fiercely about the heat, the sun, the cats, and the obnoxious idiosyncracies of revolving doors. And as he passed, stamping up the stairs, the neat, tanned-skinned bell-boys whispered about the fierce tempers of Englishmen.

Carrisford slammed the door and dropped his briefcases carelessly on the floor. The particularly heavy one fell squarely on his right instep. He gave a roar of pain and impatience, and kicked the offending briefcase hard — which caused more pain to his foot and did little to improve the condition of the briefcase. Carrisford dropped on the couch, and proceeded to pour himself a gen-

erous glass of Crown Royal, which he had neatly smuggled through customs.

"Good God," he sighed, "that's damn good stuff," and he fumbled for the bottle to refill his glass.

He was getting slightly inebriated when he looked up and saw a small, gray cat with yellow eyes sitting on the coffee table, staring at him intently. Carrisford stared back.

"Hey, shoo, get out," he mumbled. "What the hell's a bloody cat doing in here anyway? Get out!" he shouted. And the cat vanished, simply disappeared. It just suddenly wasn't there any more.

"Good God," whispered Carrisford. He shook his head. "You've had too much to drink, Will, you're imagining things. Simmer down."

He took a long nap, dreaming all sorts of unrealistic dreams, fantastic, wild dreams. Yet when he awoke he felt better, and he went into the bathroom and looked into the mirror. "I need a shave," he thought, "I look like a Hungarian."

He had lathered his face up and was just taking his razor out, when he saw in the mirror three cats sitting behind him, sitting in the air. He gave a yell of surprise and horror and whirled around. Nothing. "It's my imagination . . . you're imagining things, Will." He tried to console himself. "I must be drunk . . . but I couldn't be, I only had one glass, maybe two . . . I couldn't have gotten drunk on that . . . but I . . . I must have, I" He felt like crying in confusion.

He finished shaving, a bit unevenly. "I'll go back to London, that's what I'll do . . . it's the heat that's doing this, that's all. I will leave tonight." He began to pack untidily, moving about the room, searching for his various belongings, when suddenly he stopped short. Six cats were sitting on the couch looking at him, all of them, all staring at him. Controlling his impulse to scream, Carrisford walked slowly towards the cats, whose eyes continued to stare into his like the painted eyes of a portrait.

"Here kitty, nice kitty." He touched the first one, trying desperately not to tremble. Gently, he ran his hand over the cat's back, feeling the thick, shiny fur beneath his fingers. The cat felt oddly like a bookend, heavy and solid. But then, as Carrisford reached for the second one, the first cat twitched his tail very slightly, and all at once the six had vanished into nothing. And then his terror returned in full force, and he ran from the room, awkwardly clutching his briefcases to his chest.

The doors of the elevator were just closing when he turned the corner. Inside the carriage were cats, nine of them this time. He gasped in horror. The picture of nine cats sitting side by side in a hotel elevator would have been comical at any other time, but now it was terrifying. He leaped down the emergency stairs as fast as he could, the briefcases clattering against the walls and knocking into his knees. In the lobby he checked out hurriedly, and left a message to tell anyone who called for him that he was going back to London, and was never, ever, returning to Egypt.

Running outside, he looked frantically for a taxi, but there was not a one to be found. "They're never around when one really needs them. Idiot things!" The native's words kept echoing in his head: "No, no sir. I do not want to die or go insane, sir, no."

He spotted a bus rattling and rumbling toward him, and he frantically waved for it to stop. It creaked to a halt before him, and the weary professor hauled himself and his briefcases in.

"Cairo Airport, are you going to the airport?" he asked the driver breathlessly. The man looked him up and down, and then nodded silently, motioning him to move back in the bus. Carrisford breathed a sigh of relief and went to sit down. There were no other people on the bus, but it was far from empty. Carrisford looked with mounting horror at the other occupants of the bus, for on the seat beside him, as there was on every other seat on both sides of the bus, was a mottled, reddish-brown cat with great, orange eyes that loomed like glowing pumpkins.

Poem For Jennifer

*I supposed a letter,
but they are forgotten slivers
of insignificances,
in drawers, closets, and boxes.
This is not for those places;
This is not a simulacrum
It is. . .*

*Home,
not mine, something to hide from,
hide in.
Sister with cherubs,
not mine, some vengeful victim
in child's masking.
But fault,
mine! Plain as dirt and sky,
painful as goodbye.
Problem to be remedied as I was,
To be put away, disguised, forgotten.*

*Panic came to me as plague
to the Pharaohs.
It fell, inescapable as death,
terrible as night to a babe,
around me as a cell with no key
—no keeper.*

*I left you as a visitor,
never to touch or see,
only to dream of, to remember,
only to regret.*

*Now you are as a visitor with a key,
only to open me, only to enter me.
And opening and entering,
I am no more an exile long away,
You no more a home long awaiting.*

*There are myriad imitations,
whisperings and nuances,
formalities dormant as winter ice.
But only one, as birth and death,
is love.*

*It is as the clouds,
there but never to be touched;
to see but never to grasp;
to describe but never to understand.*

*An idea from three words;
God from the stars.
Never touched as the body
but known as the spirit.
Not seen as the wood in the fire,
but felt as the heat.
I love you.*

*Though I may never touch, grasp,
or understand
It,
I shall drink the honey of your hair,
shall feel the dusk of your eyes,
shall breathe the air of you*

*And words and dreams shall be set aside,
for words and dreams shall never be
Touch.*

— Scott Plunket

Disillusioned Ones

*Some in seclusion
are bitter
from the disillusion
of the glitter.*

* * *

*Lest some are
and believe
the charade
that they played
by having made
a glossy mask
for the task
to deceive;
rather than to fight
they keep to themselves
careful not to love.*

— Sarah Tom

Your House

*At sunset today I heard that you moved.
You left that house I loved.
And as I relive my young heart's home,
I struggle
to believe.*

*Dear friend I ran down that space of field,
from our new house to yours,
I went around to the side screen door,
because I couldn't reach the other.
I was only six—
I said I wanted to be your friend,
because we just moved in next door,
and you, your old eyes bright and blue,
smile — you were tickled to death,
and you, you as lonely as I,
wanted to be my friend, too.*

*Your house was a heaven,
warm and clean,
patched and starched,
sweet and bright and dear.
And it never mattered where I might be—
your house
was always
home.*



*I remember the walks in the woods,
when I was not quite ten,
I talked of books and politics,
and you listened to
me. Always,
While I sailed my little doll
down the shallow stream
in the boat you made out of
cupcake papers.*

*And Oh! we moved so many times—
but I came back each time,
to your house,
while you taught me what you knew
of embroidery
and poker.
You listened still, each word I spoke
was a miracle to you,
and we moved some more, but each time we
moved,
I found myself running through that space of
field, to your house.*

*I remember the Christmas when I was older.
Snow covering your little New England farmhouse
glistened in the deep rich night
from your lamp-post
the way diamonds dance in a darkened room.
Inside the yellow light glowed
over braided rugs and
smiling faces.
You were my friend, you were, and
our love was our secret.
Snowball fights in the mittens you made,
yellow kettles and cookies—
those cookies you knew
I loved.*

*At sunset today I heard that you moved,
from your house that was always there,
and I, I am much older now,
and live quite far away,
but the grownup child
you never had
is crying.*

— Beth Nicholson

Song Of Love

*Sing to me a lie of passion:
Love 'em and leave 'em is all the rage.
No giving your heart or showing your hand,
Just try to keep your feelings caged.*

*Hop between a pair of silk sheets,
hop in, hop out all over again.
Dishing out all your fake love now,
Pile it up as high as you can.*

*Fabricated, fake emotions!
Oh yes, my Romeo, you've been had.
'Cuz Juliet was only kidding!
It sure felt good, but it sure feels bad.*

*"You're the first, the one and only."
You'll hear this over and over again.
Don't be surprised, you'll also say it
Next time you get to iniquity's den.*

*Sleepin' round without thought of profit
Is prostitution for charity.
You're doing it for Jerry's kids now,
Sure, it's okay, it's morality!*

*So just don't let anyone else know,
Morality's just being discreet.
People judge a book by its cover.
You'll do fine as long as you're neat.*

— Christopher McDonough

For Cyril From Cyril

*With your sinew of steel and thunderous
hoof,
You'd completely tear the plains astrew.
We'd soar to the Land of the Houhynhym
To stop and give the oats a chew.
But Alas! my friend, you tripped and fell—
The Vet declared, "This boy is
glue. . ."*

*So sudden gone, sweet Vanderbilt,
Good night, and happy trails to you.
— John Cusack*

Here Inside My Mind

*Why is it so lonely here?
A silence I can't seem to bear
Deafens ears that used to hear
Here inside my mind.
I think of days when youth was mine,
Look back on good times left behind.
I look and look 'til nearly blind
Here inside my mind.
Now all my years have come and gone.
All that's left to draw me on
Are memories forever strong
Here inside my mind.*

— Angela Kelley

Barathrum

*The demons and ogres,
wavering nightmares unrestrained!
The living dead,
unbound in the streets!*

*Women as men,
bleeding wounds upon faces unscathed.
Hiding, waiting for victims
with bags to hold remains,
So many lurkings and careenings about,
nocturnal, eternal.*

*Closer, closer.
So near as to breathe death into life.
Pounding, pouncing, ringing, moaning
in demonic joy.
Face over face.
Trick or treat.*

— Scott Plunkett

OASIS

by Jennifer C Cornell

Her letter had drawn him to her with the inexorable attraction of the sea for the lemmings, though he had never seen her face, though he really knew nothing tangible about her but her last name and first initial as she had signed them in the newspaper — *L. O’Riorden*. Yet he ached over the name. His own heart cried out to hers over the wild maze of the city, and his soul ran through the streets, searching for her on every corner, in every doorway, at every bus stop. But in the end his soul always returned, dust-covered, to slip again within him, drawing the shades once more.

But he soon had grown tired of this. He had read and reread her letter until the newspaper clipping became brown and withered and his mother took real notice of his haunted, watchful look and began leaving hot soup on a tray before his door. For he had begun to skip meals, to leave the house early in the morning before she could make the smells of breakfast dance up the stairs to breathe at his door, and to return home again late at night, long after she had shooed the last scent of supper from the halls. Then he would lie on the bed and smoke, staring at the ceiling, and think of the women he had passed that day on the street, brooding, brooding, brooding, until each one’s face materialized before him, and he knew once more that not one of them could have written such a letter. The girl he sought had suffered as he himself had suffered, and her face would show that suffering, would show, as did his own, that theirs was a special suffering, deeper and stronger because it was unique to them. Neither of them suffered from poverty; as for himself, he was not poor. He could have gotten a job, a good job, and earned good money, if he had tried, if he had wanted to, but what was the point? Others were willing enough to work to support him, enough to exist on at least; God knows he didn’t care to live in “style”. She was from a fairly wealthy middle-class family

who would have given her what she had asked — if she had asked. Not from pain or illness either did they suffer, for he was young and strong; he drank, but not to excess; he smoked, but nothing stronger than Merits; she did neither. Nor did he suffer from loneliness, really, for he was the Wolf, a loner, and he needed no man’s company — he smiled — only women’s. But then he had always shunned the easy women of the city streets, or rather, he had never made the effort to go to them. And he was reminded of her words, and he sought the clipping, searching for the word she had used, tentatively and unsure — *lethargy*. He remembered he had looked it up in the dictionary on the second floor of the public library, and when he had read what was written there, mouthing the words silently to himself while around him other readers mouthed other words with whispering hidden lips, the word she had used became perfect. She had, in one word, described her life and his, and had forged the bond between them. But though he knew he had heard the word, even used it himself, it coated his tongue like oil — for to him it meant that she was educated, and that had frightened him.

This fear had stayed with him that night he had gone to his room and locked the door, to be alone when he wrote to her, when he let his soul wander out from him for the last time, to slip out of his mind and body and into an envelope, to be entombed, still alive, within a white paper crypt, perhaps forever. Then he had waited for the postman, nervous at the window, his blood rioting in his ears, at his temples, his head a battle ground until the postman came up the cracked stone steps of the tenement, and the letter was gone.

It was at this point that he had begun his walks through the city, searching for his woman in the faces of the cold nameless women all around him — faces which came to torment him with their deception while his mother climbed wearily up the stairs to take

the congealed soup away and shake her head at the silence which sat, Buddha-like, outside his bedroom door.

Then, about a week after he'd sent his letter to the newspaper's personal column, came her phone call. He had heard the wall phone ringing below in the kitchen, and, as if by premonition, he had known. He rose from the bed, snubbed out his butt, and was standing with his hand on the receiver just as his mother covered the mouthpiece to call him —

"Tooo-nnnnee? Tony! Telephone, Tony!"

"I'm here, Mama." His voice from the shadows under the stairs had startled her, and she scuttled away as he turned his back on her and listened, silently watching the sweat from his hands fog the black luster of the telephone box, for he could not speak.

She must have heard his breathing.

"Mr. Lucciano? This is Lealia O'Riorden."

Her voice made him sway, dizzy and drunk.

"I-I'm calling about your letter, sir."

He swallowed hard. His tongue swelled and froze against his teeth. He fought the ice, gasping. Her voice. . .

"I don't — Mr. Lucciano, I don't know if it'd be such a good idea for us to meet. I-I may not be what you expect. You know, it — it's never the same face to face, you know that, all those stories. . ."

He heard her voice dying, and he forced his own into life, to save hers.

"No!" He breathed hard. "No, it won't be like them stories, it ain't gonna be —" He shut up quickly, before he lost her, praying it wasn't already too late. But her voice, clear and fine like expensive Irish crystal, came again, twanging gently like the strings of a harp.

"Shall we say five o'clock, then? But-but where, I seem to have misplaced your letter, I —"

He smiled, seeing her holding his letter with trembling fingers even as he clutched hers.

"Elsie's," he said, "on 32nd Street," and was saved.

* * *

They met at the door of the coffee shop, both an hour early. He knew her at once, as if he had known her all his life. She was supremely beautiful, yet his pleasure at this was not one of relief, or even pleasant surprise, for, though he had not recognized it, in his heart he had known what she would be like the first moment her voice had come to him, from the rich black redness of her hair, to the pale beauty of her skin and the tiny soft hand she held out to him in greeting. Strangely, he had not rehearsed this meeting; indeed, the fear which had suckled at him since he'd first sent the letter had been further nourished by her phone call, and he'd begun to dread their first meeting. But that fear had vanished on frightened withered wings as he took the hand she offered and without thinking pressed it to his lips. They entered the shop together.

He ordered for them both, the words coming from him easily, without thought or hesitation, on impulse, instinctively. He looked across the table at her, drunk once again, but this time with the sight and the smell of her.

"Was it wrong, then?"

She knew what he meant. She shook her head slowly, gazing at him. "No."

"I — ain't what you expected, mebbe?"

She smiled. "'Expected?' No. Not what I expected. What I . . . dreamed of? Hoped for? Yes. But 'expected?' No. Never."

The food came. They ate, or rather, they watched each other eat, and what had seemed to him to be the most repulsive of human activities seemed beautiful to him in her. For under the thick lashes she stole glances from him — the same glances he was stealing from her, and their eyes met suddenly over the ketchup bottle and the mustard pot, and the fantastic unlikelihood of the situation hit them both. She touched his cheek once.

"So beautiful," she whispered, incredulous, and he called the waitress over for another round of fries, hot and with salt.

* * *

About 9:30 that night, Mrs. Lucciano came cautiously into Elsie's, peering through the yellow haze of greasy, pungent air and heavy cigarette smoke, looking for her son. After she'd bothered the late-night customers with questions and descriptions, one of the waitresses called the manager to handle the problem, since she personally didn't want anything to do with a crazy little old foreign dame squawking for some guy named Tony. So she sent the old woman into the manager's office in the back, where she appealed to his memory — hadn't he seen a boy, a tall boy, nearly thirty now, a good boy always —

"Tall, skinny guy — scrawny really — pimples, dirty blond hair, kinda baldin', wears one of them long green army coats?"

The manager spoke from across the table, eyes closed, feet up, hands behind his head, smoking little Italian cigars.

"Yes, yes, that's my son Tony. Such a smart boy, never eats enough, though —"

"Yeah, well. He left here two hours ago with this kinda dumpy dame with orange hair. Had freckles. Wore specs. Had a yellah raincoat. But that was two hours ago, lady. He ain't here now."

Mrs. Lucciano thanked him hurriedly and went out, and the manager took a last drag on his cigar, and thought again how he should've shelled out the dough for detective school. His old man had been right. He did have a helluva eye for detail.

Refuge By The Sea

*Sitting on the peaceful beachside,
The place where I wish to reside,
I dream of all the pleasant things here;
Where all my worries disappear.*

*Listening to the soft ocean,
I enjoy the wavy motion.
Wiping my brain of all despairs,
The noise of the tide cleanses my ears.*

*Lying in an air of freshness,
The breezes sweet; pollutionless.
Breathing in the appealing air,
I relax, my mind becomes clear.*

*Watching the dimming sunset fall,
and gulls flying the sky so tall,
My enticed eyes are released from tears
And all complicated affairs.*

— Victor Hom

Song For Madeline: Third Movement

*I've just left you in the rain.
You are home now.
I shall have to remember you until
tomorrow.
But you are with me
in the rain.*

*It comes from above as it never has.
Cascading, speeding down the heavens
from castles of clouds it is ceaseless
and I cannot escape it.
You are here.*

*You dapple and drench my face,
my lips are wet with you.
You are everywhere about me.
My hair drips and tangles with you.
Lifting my head, I drink of you.*

*I see you grey and falling against the sky.
You are touching all that I see,
making the earth cry your name.
You are the rain.*

— Scott Plunket

The New Seas

*I love the stars and moon.
What promises they hold!
Will not some sage years and years hence
Recall the travels
My fathers made?*

*Will not some Aeneas, Ulysses,
'Courage' say,
'The mounting breeze will roll us starward
soon'?*

*The mysteries yet untrod,
The sparkling brightness,
Worlds and worlds and worlds and worlds
Are the hope
Of my time.*

*They are the jewels of the Gods,
Our crystal showers.
They are the seas, the West again.
They are the fireside stories
For children,
Our children,*

*The children who hear of the glory
Of this ancient land,
When it is no longer
But legend.*

*Come forth, oh come forth
All ye travelers,
Who dare to adventure yourselves to the
heavens.
The Seas,
And the star's children
Are calling
Once, once again.*

— Beth Nicholson

THE ASTRONAUT

by Michael O'Laughlin

I sit alone in this lonely forsaken place.
There is no escape from the impending doom
which must fall upon me. Ah, yes, 'space —
the final frontier' . . . I find myself
wondering if this will not be indeed my final
frontier. . . .

My neck stiffens as the time grows near.
Suddenly, the room is illuminated by the wild
flashing of lights, and the sound of piercing
sirens rocks the air. I am terrified by all this
madness and confusion; and then the count-
down begins. At first only little blasts of
noise can be heard, so brief that they are
hardly noticeable at all. Then the main
engines fire up and roar like thunder from the
heavens. Lift-off! Gravity restricts my move-
ments, and all communication with Earth is
hampered by atmospheric conditions, and I
am at the mercy of the stars.

Finally, after travelling thousands of
miles, my ship has obtained its desired orbit,
and the immediate danger has passed. I
wonder, why have I done this perilous deed?
For the love of my country? To see beyond
the confines of this, the one world we know?
Possibly, but I guess man has always wanted
to do the impossible, to overcome all obsta-
cles and achieve new heights. And so I must
rely on my own inner strength and abilities to
complete the mission successfully. I *will* over-
come my fear! And yet, as I look down upon
the Earth so many miles below, only one
thought is in my mind: how do I get down?

A Rainbow

*A rainbow full of colours,
Appears beneath a cloud;
A magnitude of hues,
Covered by a shroud.*

— Kirsten Nutt

TEARS OF A CLOWN

by Van A. Owens

The Clown sat alone in his dimly lit dressing room, somberly applying his makeup. This was a process which had once held a mystical fascination for him, but which now was only a simple mechanical function. He remembered how, when he had first become a clown, he had decided dramatically to always apply his makeup by the light of a candle; now, as the wick burned motionlessly on the stubby lump of wax, he thought how strangely ironic it was now that he should put on a clown's face in almost complete darkness.

The candle flickered slightly as the door was pushed open, shooting a shaft of new light across the floor.

"Who's that?"

There was no answer. The Clown turned around on his stool and saw a boy, the clean-up boy, standing in the doorway holding a broom and shovel. "Come in, son, the place could use a little cleaning," and he turned back to the mirror to put the finishing touches on the teardrop that he always painted on his left cheek. The boy came in, dropping his implements on the floor, and sat down on the greasy trunk that lay beside the dressing table. "Why don't you empty the trash can or something. That's what they pay you for, son."

"But that's not what I came for," said the boy, in a voice that was much higher than he had intended.

"Oh." The Clown looked as grave as possible beneath his comical facade. "Well, then; just what did you come for, son?"

"I want you to show me how to be a clown. That's why I came to the circus in the first place, you know, not to clean up after Bertha the Wonder Elephant."

A boy who ran away to join the circus, thought the Clown. I didn't think that kids were still that naive. But why not, I did the same thing, and it wasn't that long ago. "So you want to be a clown. Why don't you let

me tell you how it'll be, first, eh?"

The Clown turned back to the mirror to make sure that his face was perfect, and then he smiled. He had never told anyone of his adventures as a young, would-be clown, and now the idea strangely amused him. He called the boy to him and placed his hand on the slender shoulder.

"When I was a kid, maybe a little younger than you, I wanted with all my heart to be a member of a circus. I'm not sure why — maybe because I always did like to make people laugh — but I wanted to be a clown. Oh, not just your ordinary, rubber-chicken, pie-in-the-face clown. No, I wanted to be famous, the Prince of the Clowns.

"I started off just like you, doing every dirty job in the business, driven on by dreams. Those were miserable years, son. I'm sure you know all too well how miserable they were. But finally it happened: I got my break. One of the minor clowns had gotten himself drunk and then asked me to go on for him. I'm telling you kid, it was the greatest moment of my life, that first performance. We clowns really make fools of ourselves, but when we hear that laughter. . . It makes it all seem worthwhile. I think I'll never forget that first roar of laughter.

"But don't be deceived, son, because that's not all there is. True, the laughter does make up for a lot of it, but it lasts only for a moment and when it's gone . . . when it's gone there's nothing left. Then you can only remember how foolish you looked. But there's always another performance and they laugh louder and louder each time." The Clown paused for a moment, thinking. "You know, maybe there's something wrong with us, with us clowns, I mean. Most people hate to be laughed at, and here we are living for it.

"But — you say you want to be a clown. Well, I'll teach you everything you need to know." The boy's face lit up. "But first,

look at me, hard, and let me tell you what you see, because you're too young still to see for yourself. I'm a man, a grown man, whose life-work is to paint his face and act the fool so other people can laugh. Is that what you want to do with your life? When I was just starting off, an old clown told me something that I have since found to be all too true. He said, 'A clown will laugh all day and then cry all night, but when he cries, this too is funny. For when he cries you see only the comical tears of a clown.' I suppose you don't know what that means, and at your age you probably don't really care, but I've figured out what it means and it's this: a clown's life is a joke, whether inside or outside the center ring."

Feeling strangely bewildered, the Clown turned back to the mirror and placed a tiny ragged derby on his head. He hadn't meant to discourage the boy. He had just said a few things that he hadn't intended; indeed, he had never before realized that he possessed such thoughts.

"I'll teach you all you need to know," the Clown repeated, and the boy beamed again. "But now it's time for me to go on. Why don't you come and watch the act, kid?"

The boy was jubilant. His mind began to soar with the balloon-colored images of his life as a clown. The dream which had eluded him for so long was now being placed in the very palm of his hand. And so he watched the act with keen interest, knowing that in a few weeks he would be playing a part in it as well. The very thought sent a shiver of excitement down his back.

The Clown was being pursued by a couple of clown-cops and the crowd was eating it up. At the end of the skit, one of the cops kicked the Clown just a little too hard, and he fell face-down in the sawdust. As the Clown raised his head and looked up, his eyes met those of the boy, and in those eyes the Clown saw something despairing but hopeful, something determined to win yet destined to lose. In those eyes, he saw himself, and as one who had not cried for so many years, he wept.

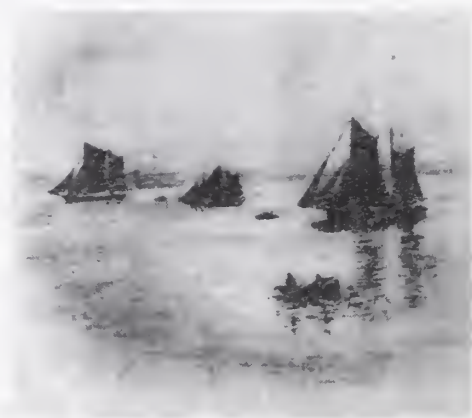
The boy, who up until now had watched the act with eyes which saw only the brilliant, blinding visions of a dream now to be reality, saw that the Clown was indeed crying, and all about him he heard the crowd laughing. He wondered how they could laugh at the Clown and at the same time he realized why they were laughing. For for the first time he saw in the Clown's eyes the soul of a man, and the fathomless remorse of a man; he saw the loneliness of a clown's heart. But the crowd saw none of this. They saw only the comical tears of a Clown, the useless weeping of a fool.

After the show, when the weary Clown returned to his trailer, the boy was nowhere to be found. At first the Clown resolved to look for him, took a step or two forward, and then stopped, returning instead to his room. The Clown chuckled once or twice, and, whistling tunelessly, sat down before the mirror and began to remove his make-up.

Fantasy

*Fun and
easy are
fantasies,
Wonderful
freeminded
and filled
with a thought
of nothing
that can be
bought.*

— Sarah Tom



Untitled

*In me lies the fear
Of making something
Out of nothing,
Something never there.*

*Assumptions are easy to make,
Hopes can rise too high.
Disappointments are hard to take,
Best not to rely
On a quickly made conjecture,
For it's heartbreak you'll get.*

*For jumped-to conclusions
Are easily shattered;
In an illusion,
All hopes are scattered.*

— Sarah Tom

Humpty Dumpty Years

*These are your Humpty Dumpty years.
The ones that give rise to all of your fears,
When you fall off a wall that you've built 'round
yourself,
You cry and you scream but there's no one to
help,
And you finally realize you're all by yourself,
Then the bird of ill omen has entered your soul
And the school of the Cynics was right after all.
There is nothing,
There's nothing,
There's nothing at all,
That one man, just one man, ever can solve.*

— Christopher McDonough

THE SAGA OF KYLIT KYROSSON

by Joshua Glenn

The huge buck twitched as it lay on the cold pavement of the small-town parking lot.

Kylit had wandered far from his herd in search of food. As he had neared the highway, he had caught the sudden strong scent of---! With a frightened snort, he had whirled around. There, crouched low to the ground, was a huge, savage brute of a dog. The beast had been abandoned many months earlier and now had grown into a fierce predator. Kylit had bounded onto the highway and had fled in panic.

In his confusion, he had raced directly into a human-town. He had started a wheeling retreat when several "tame" dogs had taken up the chase. Kylit had broken into a gallop.

Racing along the edge of the road, he had somehow failed to notice the human-child in front of him. When he suddenly did notice her, he had instinctively turned away and had started across the road — and was struck heavily by a speeding car. The car had spun, slowed, and then speeded on.

Overwhelmed by pain, Kylit had at first hopelessly awaited the dogs. Then through dimming eyes he had noticed a strange hill rising in the distance, and had vaguely remembered that fighting on a hill gave the defender the advantage.

Swiftly, he had weighed his chances. He was tired and hurt, while the dogs were fairly fresh. Yet still he had stood up shakily. Only one thought kept him going. Kylit, son of Kyros, would not give up!

With a tremendous effort of speed, Kylit had burst through crowds of humans, dodged cars, and before he knew it had arrived at the 'hill' — a stone parking ramp. He had raced up the slope until he had reached the half-way point fifty feet above the ground. There he had stopped. The 'hill' had made him nervous.

Frightened, he had leaped away with a mighty bound. Clearing the rail of the parking ramp, he had plummeted like a stone. The ground had rushed up, and his mighty antlers had slammed into the pavement with five hundred pounds of force behind them. With a roar of agony, he had rolled to his side, struggling to stand. He could not.

With the sound of the approaching dogs ringing in his ears, Kylit had fixed his eyes upon the distant forest, and, with a sigh, had died.

SHADOW MAN

by Paul Laurino

'The awful shadow of some unseen Power floats, tho' unseen, amongst us.

'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' — Percy Bysshe Shelley

"How old are you, Danny?"

"Eight."

"And eight-year-olds are big boys, aren't they, Danny?"

"Y-yes."

Danny stared into the cruel, cold eyes of the dark-haired, rugged-faced man beside him. He hated this man who sat next to him on the bed, piercing him with questions. And everytime Danny meekly replied, the walls of Danny's bedroom seemed to move in on him closer and closer, smothering him. The man spoke again.

"And big boys aren't scared of stupid things, are they, Danny?" he asked in a harsh tone.

Danny could no longer breathe. His voice was frozen in his throat, cutting off his air. He struggled, but could not reply.

"Are they, Danny?" the man insisted, his tone louder, but not yet shouting.

Shaking his head feverishly, Danny managed a gasping denial.

The man's face formed a sneer. "You say 'no', Danny, but . . ." He stopped, glaring at the child who stared back fearfully. Now the man grinned. "I'm going to turn off the lights, Danny."

Danny suddenly spoke out, "No!"

"Yes." The man's arm reached back towards the wall.

"Please, no," Danny pleaded timidly.

The lights flickered out, and darkness pounced upon Danny and into the room. He heard a soft clatter; then a second venomous voice hissed into the blackness.

"I have something in my hand, Danny. Do you know what it is?"

"Please take it away." Tears began to drop from Danny's eyes.

"Why, Danny? It's only a flashlight, a harmless little flashlight."

"No, please. No." Danny said.

"I'm going to turn it on, Danny." Danny could almost see the man's grinning face in the dark.

"Please . . . no." Glaring light burned into Danny's eyes.

"Turn around, Danny, and look at the wall."

Danny was sobbing uncontrollably and did not turn.

"I said turn around, Danny!" A large hand grabbed Danny by the skull and jerked his head around. "Look, Danny, look at the wall. That's your shadow, Danny. Do you see it? Danny! Do you see it?" Danny sobbed, muttering, "No, please."

There it stood, an inky black silhouette etched definitely against the wall, gazing back into Danny with invisible eyes. Danny loathed the Shadow Man, more even than he hated the dark-haired man behind him. But there was another feeling he had for the Shadow Man that was greater than even his abhorrence — fear. A fear so intensified now that Danny's eyelids drew back over his eyeballs until they were flattened against his head, and he confronted the horror. And then he screamed.

"Please, please!"

Suddenly there was a bang from across the room, and the lights came on about him. The Shadow Man faded to a pale grey. Danny looked toward the other side of the room and saw a sandy-haired woman in the doorway with her hand on the light switch. A look of shock was in her face.

"Mom," exclaimed Danny, breaking free of the hand on his head. He ran to the woman, who clutched him to her waist.

"My God," she cried, putting her arms around the boy. "Raymond, what in the world have you been doing to him?"

"The kid's eight years old," he exploded, getting up from the bed and flinging his

hands in the air, "and scared of his own shadow. *His own shadow!* He's a sissy!" Then he trumped over to the shaking boy. "Well, I'll tell you, boy. I'm going to make a man out of you, if it drives me to my grave!" Then he stormed away down the hall and down the stairs.

Danny's mother bent down to him, caressing his face.

"The Shadow Man came again, and this time he was awful dark. He was the blackest ever. I was so scared." Danny choked.

"It's alright," his mother soothed, "he's gone now."

This realization calmed Danny. Then, wiping his eyes, he looked over his mother's shoulder down the hall. "I hate him, too," he murmured.

"Who?" His mother heard him. "Your father?"

"He's not my father, my real father died. I hate my new father."

"Now, Danny, don't say that. You've got to understand Raymond . . . I mean, Daddy. You see, when he married me, he took you as a son. He wants his son to live up to his expectations. It's just your fear of this 'Shadow Man' that has him upset." She stopped for a moment, then went on. "And he's right, we have to shake this fear of yours, which is why I'm going to send you to a psychiatrist. His name is Bruce Heinz. He's the type of doctor who . . ."

"No one can get rid of the Shadow Man." Danny stated, a note of finality in his voice.

"Well, we're still going to give Mr. Heinz a try. Now your first appointment is tomorrow. I'll drop you off on my way to Aunt Sabrina's and —"

"Do you have to go to Aunt Sabrina's?" Danny looked up pleadingly.

"Danny," she said firmly, "we discussed this before. I'll only be at Auntie's for a few days. You can stay with Dad that long alone. I'll have a talk with him before I leave."

But Danny broke away and slumped on his bed. His mother almost went to him, but then decided to leave him there, brooding.

* * *

Danny sat down on the sofa. The doctor's office was cozily furnished. Across from Danny was an easy chair, and on the far side of the room was an oaken desk before a large window which overlooked the city. The doctor was outside in the waiting room, talking with Danny's mother, so Danny had time to think. He felt uneasy this morning. Last night he had dreamt of the Shadow Man. The Shadow Man had whispered terrible things to him in the dream, and although he couldn't remember what he had said, he shuddered when he thought of the Shadow Man's cold, husky voice. It was these morbid thoughts that caused Danny to jump when Doctor Heinz opened the door and entered the room. The tall, lean man viewed the boy sharply when he saw him start, and then, in a friendly voice, said, "Hello, Danny."

The warm voice soothed the boy, who replied without hesitation, "Good morning."

The doctor smiled at the return greeting as if privately acknowledging his own victory. Then, walking over to the desk, he said, "I've just been talking with your mother." He paused to pick up a clip-board and then went on. "Danny," he asked, "have you ever heard of 'umbrophobia'?"

"No," the boy answered.

"No, of course not, not an eight year old," he murmured to himself. To Danny he explained, "'Umbrophobia' is the name for the fear of shadows."

"But I'm not scared of *all* shadows," Danny piped, "I'm scared of the *Shadow Man*."

Doctor Heinz sunk into the easy chair, crossed his legs, and rested his clipboard there. "Yes, I know," He looked into Danny's eyes and said, "Danny, who *is* the Shadow Man?"

Danny suddenly withdrew and was quiet for a moment. Then in a somber tone said, "He's me. But not the real me. He's the dark me, the *bad* me. I hate him . . . I'm scared of him."

"Are you scared every time you see him?"

"Sometimes he's greyish, pale, or very fuzzy, then I'm not scared of him. But when he's dark and black, like in my dreams, then I'm scared."

"You dream of him?"

"Yes."

"A lot?"

Pause, then, "I guess so."

Doctor Heinz eyed Danny shrewdly, then asked, "Did you dream of him last night?"

"Yes," a shaky reply.

"What did he do?"

"Nothing, he talked."

"What did he say?"

"I-I can't remember."

"Try, Danny."

"I can't."

"Try, Danny. Remember his voice,"

Doctor Heinz was intense now. "Try to think of what he said, Danny. Try!"

Danny closed his eyes, thinking hard, then harder. A headache began, but he pushed harder. Nothing. Harder. Nothing. *Harder*. Wait! *Harder*! "I-I can't remember. I'm sorry."

"It's alright Danny," Doctor Heinz said, "at least you tried." But deep inside Dr. Heinz was screaming a long curse.

It wasn't until later when he was waiting outside the doctor's office building for his father to pick him up, that Danny remembered what the Shadow Man had said. 'Raymond', he had said. 'Raymond,' Danny muttered to himself.

* * *

Raymond lay in his bed, staring into the darkness. Behind him, the clock by the door quietly ticked. It was only nine thirty, but he was exhausted and he had gone to bed early. Getting up at six o'clock in the morning, walking to work after seeing his wife off, working the seven hours at the steel mill, then coming home only to get in the car and pick up Danny at the psychiatrist's — his wife had finally convinced him that Danny should see a professional — all this had worn him out. Now, with Danny asleep and the house all settled, he was ready for sleep.

He was about to shut his eyes when he

heard a noise. From behind him came the creaking of the door opening. Raymond watched as a slit of light appeared on the wall, then widened into a white rectangle with the further opening of the door.

Inside the cast of light was Danny's shadow. Without bothering to turn around to face the boy, in an irate tone Raymond asked, "What do you want, Danny?"

There was no answer.

"Danny, what do you want?" His tone was harsher.

But still, silence.

"Danny, I'm talking to you. Answer me!"

Raymond got up on his elbow and turned to face Danny in the doorway.

But there was no one there.

Raymond could see into the hall where the bright night-light glowed; but the hallway was bare.

"Danny, where are you?"

Raymond's voice stopped. Then for some reason he didn't know, he began slowly to turn to face the wall. Maybe somewhere deep down he knew what he would see, yet now when he did face the wall, he gasped as if totally unprepared for what he saw. The shadow was still there, dark and black.

Raymond's heart was beating faster and faster until it seemed to him a steady, unbroken roar. Then it ascended to his throat . . . the shadow was moving.

"Oh my God."

It was coming off the wall towards him.

"Oh holy Jesus, mother of Christ!"

Raymond scrambled up out of the bed. It ain't possible, he thought. It just ain't possible. Raymond scuttled backward into the door, banging his elbow on the knob. The Shadow Man raised a jet-shrouded hand toward the shaking Raymond.

"No!" Raymond tossed open the bedroom door, and sped down the hall. Ahead of him at the other end of the hall, getting nearer as he ran was a closed door bearing a plastic name plate with a picture of a trolley-car on it. The trolley-car read, 'Danny.' Raymond had always hated that name plate; he thought that stuff was only for little girls. But now as he ran, he prayed

madly he would reach it. . .

Raymond thrust himself upon the door, banging on it, calling out Danny's name. Then quickly turning the door knob, he burst inside. The light from the hall poured into the room with him revealing Danny, who lay in bed, sleeping peacefully, his red blanket pulled up to his shoulders. Raymond fell upon the sleeping boy.

"Danny," he screamed, shaking him. "Wake up!"

But he slept on.

"For Chri'sakes, Danny, wake up!"

Raymond gave up — it was no use. Danny's slumbering face remained unaltered. Raymond turned slowly around. The Shadow Man stood ominously in the doorway.

"Oh Lord, please, *please*, get me out of this," he stuttered.

Then his eye caught the glimmer of the night-light over the shoulder of the shady figure — and Raymond smiled. "Of course, the *light*. I'll turn off the light. Without a light he can't be. How can a shadow be without light to cast it!" Raymond tensed himself. Then he sprung up, to charge past the Shadow Man toward the light.

But he never made it.

He felt cold fingers grab him by the ankle. The green-carpeted floor rushed to his face. Something cracked, and Raymond felt a warm trickle on his upper lip; the sweet taste of blood tinged his tongue. Rolling onto his back, he saw the Shadow Man standing above him, and his ears began to ring, his brain boiling. The darkness had surrounded him. His head was all aflame. The darkness began to engulf him, swallowing more and more until everything was gone, and he was dead.

* * *

Standing at his desk, Dr. Heinzl took one last doubtful look at the newspaper article before finally picking up the telephone receiver. He began to dial his home number. He would have to let his wife know that he'd be home early tonight. As he dialed the last number, he heard the door open.

"Hello, Dr. Heinzl," said a spunky voice.

Dr. Heinzl looked over at the door. Danny stood in the doorway.

"D-Danny," he stammered. A ringing came over the line.

Danny shut the door, strolled over to the couch, and plopped down on it.

There was a click and Dr. Heinzl heard a feminine voice speak through the receiver, "Hello?" He hung up the phone unthinkingly. "I didn't think you would be coming today." Danny's blank face stared back. Dr. Heinzl coughed and loosened his tie. "Well, with your father's death and all. Listen, Danny, I'm very sorry about your father." You poor boy, Dr. Heinzl thought. You had gotten up in the middle of the night and found your father lying still in the hall. You called the police, and then they contacted your poor mother. He was lying dead in the hall with his eyes wide open and his lips pulled back over his teeth in terror. The police had found a blood stain on the rug and deduced he had fallen on his face, smashing his skull and stabbing the broken shards of bone into his brain. But I mean Jesus! He must have fallen hard; I mean hard!

"My mother thought I should get out of the house and get my mind off it. She figured her friends and relatives would make it worse for me if I went to them, since they would all be crying and keep telling me how sorry they are. So she sent me here." Danny's speech woke Dr. Heinzl from his ponderings. "Yes, well, a good decision on her part," Dr. Heinzl answered uneasily. He thrust the newspaper into his desk and approached Danny. "Actually," he said, trying to be cheerful, "I think I have good news for you. I was thinking about this fear last night." He sat down in his easy chair, but before he could continue, Danny broke in.

"Fear?" he asked, puzzled.

"Yes," Dr. Heinzl returned, equally puzzled. He paused and looked at Danny. "Your fear of the Shadow Man."

"*Fear* the Shadow Man?" Danny looked back at the doctor. "I don't fear the Shadow Man." Danny leaned forward and grinned at the perplexed psychoanalyst. "I love the Shadow Man. I just looove him."

Saturday Afternoons

*Saturday afternoons,
slightly flat Coke and
Old movies;
Sitting in the easy chair,
While unchanging friends
Entertain me,
Never aging
Flynn and Gable,
Hepburn and Garland,
An endless array of
Handsome heroes and
blushing maidens
Parade before my dazzled eyes.
Watching, I laugh, then cry
At people who live in
Worlds of glitter,
Where endings are
Forever happy.
But I just sit back,
Sipping my Coke, and wait
For the screen of my T.V.
To fill up with people,
Immortal, ever young,
Coming to me on
Saturday afternoons.*

— Kristin Daly



Another Holiday

*Another holiday comes,
Bringing its joy and pain—
More pain than joy this year.
But I guess that is to be expected.
Each year holds a little less meaning.
The magic is gone.
It's not as giddy and it's not as fun —
We're not as happy and we're not as young
As we were.*

*Another holiday goes
Leaving memories and pictures,
And all our new-found wealth.
But what has this holiday left us of real
value?
I don't know. . .
But there's always next year.*

— Brian Savage

Acclimation (For Beth Grant)

Scott Plunket

(Curtain)

A woman and her son are sitting down to dinner. The mother sits at the head of the table facing the audience, the boy to her right. Both stare blankly at the foreground throughout the scene. They are directing their vision toward a "television". Though not actually a prop on the stage, the television is represented by a flickering spotlight that changes colors as images flicker and change on a television screen. As they say their blessing, their voices are drowned out by the evening news.

Mother and Son: Dear Lord, we . . .

Newscaster: A terrible mishap occurred at Massachusetts General Hospital today where doctors say Johnathan Bridges, admitted for amputation of a cancerous leg, awoke to find that the wrong leg had been . . .

Mother: *(pointing to plate on table)* David?

Boy: Drumstick please.

Newscaster: . . . family of Mr. Bridges has filed suit against the hospital in Suffolk District Court. Well, how's the weather look for this weekend, Tom? *(fades)*

Boy: This is good, Mom. New recipe?

Mother: Yes, I saw it in Family Circle so I thought I'd try it. I really . . . *(Newscaster's voice builds)*

Newscaster: Tragedy and disaster struck in Italy today when thousands were killed and many more injured in what officials are calling the worst earthquake in the country's history. We have a report now from our correspondent in Rome, Richard Davies.

Newscaster #2: *(garbled)* Bodies and parts of bodies are still being discovered. . . *(fades)*

Boy: *(meekly)* Mom, I flunked that math test today.

Mother: *(angry)* What?!

Boy: Don't get upset, mom.

Mother: I'm not upset. I'm just, well, I'm used to it, I guess.

She is acclimated
(Curtain)

C'est La Vie

*Tired people walk the streets,
No more strength to lift their feet,
No more pride to lift their heads,
Their minds are empty, hopes are dead.
They come home and watch the news:
Murder, arson, drug abuse.
Working days, not sleeping nights,
They've no more hopes to reach the Heights.
All they have is lots of bills,
And dried-up plants on window sills.
How can they think of relaxation
While slaving to keep up with inflation?
Their remaining single pleasure
Is to raise their kids, whom they treasure.*

*These little cherubs go to school,
Where they do drugs and alcohol.
They smoke, they cut, they cheat, they lie;
Their parents simply close their eyes
On all these things, and only pray
For better days, for happy days.
That they avoid all the dangers,
like getting busted, starting fights,
Getting stoned with the gang at night.*

*And when these prayers do come true,
And the kid matures at twenty-two,
Gets married, settles down, has kids,
Then gives Mom and Dad a kiss,
Sends them down to rest their bones
In the Blue Mountain Nursing Home,
While they, of course, would rather be
With children, grand kids, family.
But they thank God for what they get,
Bed and food, a roof over their heads.*

*And then when they are totally senile,
They crack a wide and toothless smile,
Thinking, "It could have been much worse"
And sit there waiting for the hearse.
Then the whole cycle repeats,
Tired people walk the streets,
And hope their children have the spirit
To face the world and do good in it.*

— Anonymous

NUMBERS ARE ONLY NUMBERS

by Duncan Coakley

F-22 walked down his imitation gravel driveway to his G-X/1 transportation vehicle, parked in front of his one-floor, flat-roofed, plastobrick-faced, two-bedroom living facility. He stopped and gazed proudly at the other abodes on 1327th St. They too were all one floor, flat roofed, and plastobrick-faced, with two bedrooms. This was progress.

His neighbor, B-79, walked out onto *his* gravel driveway in his black Regulation-issue suit, approached his G-X/1 transportation vehicle and then turned to admire *his* one-floor, flat-roofed, plastobrick-faced two-bedroom living facility. This was organization.

Their neighbor, K-24, came out of his living facility, nodding to the two men dressed in their regulation black suits, and approached his garage door. A few minutes later K-24 was seen driving down his gravel driveway in a white Lambourghinni. B-79 almost stopped breathing. K-24 had a car.

K-24 revved the powerful engine long and loud, chuckling at his neighbors who glared in disgust. Or was it envy? Many others in black regulation suits peered stealthily out their windows as K-24 backed out, leaving skid marks at least a mitron long.

F-22 turned to B-79. "This is outrageous! A car in the Regulation Quadrant!" And he stalked away in a rage. This was loyalty.

B-79 turned to the retreating figure of F-22 and answered, "Yep." In the year 2021 finances were better than ever, production was increasing by 13% each year, and the art of conversation was dead. In fact, the word 'art' had almost disappeared. In fact, there was no expression at all, no imagination, no meaning, no names, just progress.

The early rush hour traffic rumbled down the single lane assigned to non-emergency vehicles. K-106 grumbled, glaring at the two unused emergency lanes reserved for Regulation officials which flanked him on either side. He had never actually seen those lanes used, ever, and could only reflect bitterly

how much faster everyone would move along if that lane were open to civilians as well. But rules were rules and rules were laws and laws had to be obeyed even if they were foolish.

Hearing a low rumbling behind him, K-106 glanced up casually into the rear-view mirror — and his mouth fell open. A car was flying along the left-hand emergency lane as if on air. A car! He hadn't seen one in ages, not even in a picture, for all the photographs from 1995 on back were kept locked up inside Regulation Headquarters, along with all the other links to the past — books, records, knowledge-tapes, video cassettes, etc.

K-106 wasn't the only one who saw the car. G-304-07, a certain Frank Connolly, saw it too, and in an instant he had clutched the steering wheel, pulled into the emergency lane, and followed that car. Astonished faces here and there were soon pulled back inside, and in no time at all both lanes were completely filled, the white Lambourghinni in the lead.

On the 89th floor of the Regulations Building, A-149, the advisor to the Boss, slammed down his tele-receiver, then stood up and paced the office floor. Now some nut had a car, and Regulation was in big trouble. He gritted his teeth and entered the Boss' office.

But there was no need to fear; the Boss, A-01, was smoking a cigar and making paper spaceships — occupations in which he indulged only when a difficult situation arose; and so it was obvious that he already knew.

The Boss said, "What the hell are we going to do? The people are rebellious."

A-149 chuckled. "Yeah, it's a revolting situation." The art of joke-telling had deteriorated along with the other arts.

"Just what I need in a time of turmoil — a stand-up comedian. Just be quiet and look at this."

He pushed a button and an image-viewer popped up out of the desk, showing thou-

sands of G-X/1 vehicles streaming towards Regulation Headquarters. The Boss viciously punched a second button, changing to a Regulation channel on which an excited reporter was telling the American public that this should have happened long ago, and would have if the Boss hadn't been in control of "the damn military". At this point, the newsman disappeared as two black-suited soldiers silently and efficiently dragged him out of camera range. An ad for Transgalactic Spacelines quickly filled the screen.

A-149 looked down at his toes. "I guess we're done for."

The Boss stood up, adjusting his black suit, and smirked. "Oh, I wouldn't say that. Like the man said, I still control the military."

A-149's mouth dropped wide open. "You're going to fight them? Your own people?"

"All Caesar had was his army." . .

"Yeah, and his own friends killed him." The Boss' assistant stood up. "I think they're right. You are a damned fruitcake!" Dramatically he tore off his black suit, walked quickly to the door, and turned.

"And my name is George Thomas. I am not a number."

After he had gone, the Boss picked up the military radio.

"Yeah, pick up George — I mean, A-149, before he leaves the building, will you? Then get about fifty soliders out there on the steps." The Boss paused for a moment and then added, as an afterthought, "George'll be the one in his underwear."

* * *

Five minutes later, the Boss stood waiting on the front steps of the Regulation Building. He was worried. Even from his office on the 89th floor he had been able to hear the revving of engines and the loud cheering that was approaching ever nearer from all directions. Soon the street was filled with screaming people, thousands of them, and thousands of G-X/1 transportation vehicles . . . and one white Lambourghinni. Suddenly the taunts and screaming insults were hushed as the door of the car swung open,

and its driver began to ascend the steps, staring straight into the Boss' eyes all the way. Behind him trailed the angry masses of Johns, Janes, Franks, and Marys.

Backed by the echoing chant of "Down with the Boss — it's no loss!" the proud young man came face to face with his adversary, A-01.

The Boss laughed, once.

"Arrest him!"

Two black-suited soldiers approached the two men, saluted for the last time, and dragged the Boss away.

Dry Ideas

*Thwarting creativity,
you put it in dry thought,
and dusty mediocrity,
but all correct. You wrought
bleak light when the sun shines,
and mildew when it's Spring,
you wring youth from any line,
and smother any green.
And glow or feeling
you reduce to greying ash,
and any ideas wielding
difference are trash.*

*Rejecting dissimilitude,
you know you're always right,
and I'm wrong in my discrepitude,
much to your delight —
the reason that I'm so oft wrong
is the reason for my plight,
I do not think correctly,
that's why I cannot write.*

*But dusty dehydration
For you is proper thought,
though rusty desiccation
turns a poet's mind to rot —
so drone on in your favored tunes,
you are the one who's right,
I do not think correctly,
That's why I cannot write.*

— Beth Nicholson

The Interim

Why Do We Go On?

*Why do we go on?
To save the world.
Why does the world go around?
I don't know.
Why are we all here?
So we can live on—
Through space,
and sound,
Through darkness,
and danger.
Through horror,
and Hell.*

— Kirsten Nutt

*There's a verdant grove in an H-Bomb pit,
There's a garden abloom in the trench.
It's been three million years since the end
of Man;
I've been three million years on this
bench.*

*My eternity has been wrought, you see,
As I wait for the date I had planned.
On that warm day in spring, I would give
Anne the ring,
And we'd waltz to the Kiwi Band.*

*It was three thirty-six when the end began,
At three forty-two all was dark.
Only three more minutes and Anne will be
here,
So I'm waiting for her in the Park.*

— John Cusack

Fridays

*Fridays
Always come,
When I need them.
Saving
Me
From boredom.
Relaxing, carefree,
Restful, uncaring,
Glorious Fridays
Are my
Cavalry
To the rescue.
Fighting off
A band
Of bloodthirsty weekdays.
Leaving me
Refreshed,
And always
Reading.*

— Kristen Daly



The Discontent Of Our Summer

*Rolled rugs and naked walls.
Stripped beds and empty halls.
Boarding up and tearing down,
I can't believe we're leaving town.*

*As I blink the scene into memory
And cling to an image of what used to be
And choke on my last goodbye,
Even the house lets out a sigh.*

— Jennifer Cusack

In The Tomorrows

*Wherever you may wander,
I'll not be far behind.
Feelings that I've never shown you
May well come out in time.*

*But since this is the way it is,
I'll not think of the "if only's".
I'll see you in the tomorrows,
And whatever results will follow.*

— Sarah Tom

Untitled

*With the pressure gone
and her single self
feeling uneasy,
She without her clique,
Knows not what to do;
Partnered with silence
for only awhile
until tomorrow.
Once they meet again
She will shine again.*

— Sarah Tom

The Field

*The wide green field.
Perfect—
Trimmed—
Weedless—
Grass—
Astroturf.*

Hopeless

*Hello.
No, don't stop working—
'Cause I'm just passing through.
No need to trouble—
'Cause there's nothing you can do.
Yeah — I got my pains,
My sorrows.
But you can't erase my yesterdays,
or tell me my tomorrows.*

— Kirsten Nutt

Scene One

Scott Plunket

The stage is bare of props save two chairs, one on either side of a white door which stands just to the left of center-stage. In the chair to the left of the door (as seen by the audience) sits a boy writing on a pad of paper and swaying to music that fills the theatre. In the background, far to the right, nearly off-stage, stands a figure whose silhouette is seen, dark and alone. Slowly the music fades.

Boy: Bubba Winfred. (writes) Yes, that's it. (pause) Bubba Winifred (shakes head slightly) No, that's not it. Sarah Anne (writes) now that's nice but . . . James Arlington III. (Writes) Perfect! (pause) Don't kid yourself honey, you're dreamin'. (Crosses out what he has written on the pad).

Overhead spot is cast on figure in background. It walks out of light and stops just to the right of the door. During figure's walk music has again filled the theatre. There is a 15-25 second interlude before the music fades again. (knock on door)

Sister: James? It's Dana. Lemme in?

The boy dances to the door. Sister enters and takes seat to the right of the door.

Sister: James, remember that problem I was telling you about?

Boy: Let's see now, which one? You mean your tooth?

Sister: No.

Boy: The impacted one?

Sister: (louder) No!

Boy: The one they'll have to dig for with pliers?

Sister: (angry) No!! Think, dope!

Boy: (sarcastically) That's rather a contradiction don't you think, dear? Asking a dope to think is kinda futile, eh?

Sister: Don't be a smart-ass; just think.

Boy: So now I'm a smart-ass . . . Mmm. (long pause) . . . Oh yeah . . . I . . . ah . . . remember. Your, um, problem.

Sister: I had it taken care of today.

Boy: Really?

Sister: It was so easy. I mean, I guess I was

expecting surgery or something. Just a pill to swallow and that's it.

Boy: Like it was never there, right?

Sister: No, not like that. Not that simple. But . . . I dunno.

Boy: You don't have to know now. You've decided.

Sister: I guess not. I won't change my mind will I?

Boy: No. No you won't, but you'll want to. You'll want to but you can't.

Sister: I know. (Stands and exits to original position).

Spot on sister fades. Music builds. Boy crumples paper and stares blankly at the foreground. Lights become very bright. The stage is white.

(Curtain)

To My Parting Friends

*This has been a wondrous time,
So full of love and learning.
We've shared our hearts and bared our souls,
But with parting there comes yearning.*

*I long to give you so much more,
My time, my love, my all,
And as far apart as paths may go,
Our memories shall not fall.*

*Though lightning deadly strike your refuge,
Or thunder roll your heart away,
I shall lift you o'er the raging storm,
For in my hand you safe shall stay.*

*Be patient, friends; do not forget
This time we've shared so dear,
I love you now and always will,
For in my heart you're here.*

— Mary Mee Goon

A JOURNEY HOME

by Karen Wier

I sat at the edge of the bank poking a leaf into the water below. I sat, warmed by the sun which had come from behind the lazy willow and danced upon my face. The clouds had moved away a while ago, but now returned to torment me once again. The air was chilled with tiny drops of rain which the clouds threw to the ground. The drops hit the pond only to make small circles that grew larger until they were swallowed by the watery surface. I released the leaf, and watched it sink to the bottom as I stood up. I glanced from the scraggly willow to the serene pond to those mournful clouds; then I turned and moved slowly down the walk past the graves.

I shut the iron gate at the entrance and walked along the sidewalk that collided sharply with the path. The sidewalk itself ran beneath my feet, and I walked as if on infinite pieces of white slab.

Occasionally, I kicked a bottle cap out of my way. I saw people as blurs that rubbed against my raincoat, or simply flashed for a moment before me. I heard the sound of cars whizzing by on my right, but I didn't look up. I walked slowly down the endless pavement, guided only by the rhythm of my feet. The right foot, like the left, rose, fell and rose again instinctively. I was headed for home.

'Home'. Funny that I should call it that when my heart was not there. *My* home was at the frog pond, as my heart lay at its depths. My soul had fallen as the leaf that now dwelt on the pond's floor among the weeds and sand.

After an agonizing five minutes, I had arrived.

"You're late."

"Am I?"

"You're being sarcastic again," returned the familiar voice of my mother.

"Sorry." My thoughts had returned to the frog pond.

I removed my raincoat, slung it over a beaten armchair, then headed toward the dining room, glancing hesitantly inside. Beige-colored wallpaper climbed to the white ceiling and descended to the brown sanded floor. A mirror hung upon the wall over a vase of freshly picked flowers that was placed upon a three-legged stand. The china slept in a walnut cabinet on the right, which shone with the same deep color as did the oblong dining table and the polished floor beneath it. Reaching down from the ceiling was an old bronze chandelier whose unlighted candles contentedly awaited the flame.

I sat down, feeling the rays of light warm the back of my head. In silence I ate what remained from a dinner of cold chicken, never glancing up or looking around. Yet although I never looked directly at him, I knew he was there, sitting across from me. I felt his eyes inch their way over my body, and I knew he wanted to crush my soul.

I recalled earlier memories of our life together. At one time, I had cared for him; but then I had been an innocent fool. I had believed in him, loved, even worshipped him; but now there was only hatred. He was nothing to me, but I could not escape the fact that I was his son.

"Where have you been, Greg?" she asked indignantly.

"Out."

"I don't understand why you can't say more than 'out'. I'll ask you again, where have you been, and this time I want an answer."

"Walking around, I guess."

"Where?" This was not my mother's voice, but the rough, inflexible voice of my father, speaking for the first time since I had entered the room. Very casually I shrugged my shoulders.

"Where have *you* been for the last nine years?"

I felt what I had tried to restrain for the last few days was beginning to surface. I saw that it was inevitable, and greeted it, wanting it to happen. I wanted to cut him with my anger; I wanted him to squirm. I wanted him to know what I felt when I had called him at night, and he had not come. I hated him, and I wanted him to know it.

I saw the etched lines of his hard, unemotional face. I noticed the mold of his cruel, dry lips, his sloping shoulders covered by a striped shirt. He had not answered, but instead looked down at his plate and waited for his reflection to stare back at him with darting eyes.

"Greg, I think you owe your father an apology," she insisted.

"And what does he owe me? He owes me a lifetime of love and caring. That's what he owes me. Ask him to apologize for that!"

"Greg, I will not tolerate—"

"I'm sorry you feel that way." Again his rough inflexible voice spoke, and he raised his eyes until they seemed locked in the glare of my own.

"I suppose that's it, isn't it? Now you feel O.K. because you've finally said you were sorry, right? All your guilt is gone. Of course, I am automatically assuming that you ever felt guilty, but in your case, I suppose that's a long shot."

"Greg, I said I was sorry. Give me a chance, we're not all perfect."

"You certainly weren't. Although I have to admit I did love you anyway. At first. But that was my mistake, and I'm not going to let it happen again." I swallowed and continued. "I can never love you after the way you treated her. You left her all alone, so she was the one who had to do all the work. Sometimes I thought she would collapse, but she still kept going day after day — year after year. She worked steadily for nine years in fact. You can't really believe that an apology will make up for what you've done!"

"Greg, I want you to know that even while I was away I loved you and your mother very much."

"Love? When was the last time you took

me to the pond? You see, you couldn't love me because you were never here. You couldn't express it, and I never saw you try."

"There was always something separating us," he began.

"And was that my fault? Was it my fault you couldn't come to the school picnics or help me decide on a college? You weren't here. You chose not to be here."

"Greg, I want you to apologize to your father immediately!"

"Never!"

"Greg, tell your father—"

"He's not my father, he's a stranger! He's nothing but a piece of —"

I felt the blow rip across my face, shattering the flesh into tiny segments of pain. My head rocked dizzily for an infinite second. I reached for the knife. Clutching the handle, I sliced the air until a hand grabbed my wrist and wrenched the knife away. I heard it rattle upon the table as I dashed for the door.

He had struck me, and I had failed to kill him. He had failed me, and now I had failed myself.

I ran down our wooden steps, and across the sidewalk I had labored over earlier. I wanted to go home, to return to the frog pond. I made my way down the cold cement, past the graves of the dead soldiers, to arrive at the grassy bank. Here, my arms swung out and clutched the body of an oak, which welcomed me with a warmth I could find nowhere else. My eyes were filled with soothing tears which flowed across my nose to settle upon my lips, tasting of warm salt and despair. I did not wipe them away. I slid down the side of the oak until I rested against its trunk and inhaled quickly over and over again. My face still stung; there was a rose-colored patch where his blow had landed and my cheek was burning as if it had been torched. But there I was safe, and now felt at home.

Today I had returned to the pond for the first time in nine years. After my father had left, it had seemed pointless to come back. It

was something we had shared together, and I felt that it could not be experienced alone.

The cemetery was serene, but the frog pond was the real place where we had been able to talk. Here, we had resolved many of our problems; we had often sat beneath the oak and looked out across the pond. And there were times when we had said nothing, and silently watched the sky.

I never learned to fear the cemetery. I had never been afraid because he had always been with me. And I felt safe here even now, as I had then, when no one could disturb us and the gravestones were our only companions.

I suppose I had returned to the frog pond because I had needed some place to be alone, now that he had come back and taken over. I felt stifled, cramped; I needed freedom. There were times when I could not bear to be in the same room with him. Each time I came back from the pond was more painful than the last. He made the house a prison, and I was its prisoner, and I had to get out. But I had escaped to the pond, and so was free, for a time.

The pond sang with the rhythmic hum of the insects dancing over its surface. Crows swooped down and then rose up, as if pulled by an invisible string, and I sat listening, the last traces of my tears clinging still to my lashes.

Suddenly I spun around. My father loomed before me.

He sat down before me, drawing his knees up into the circle of his arms. I sat uncomfortably against the trunk of my tree, and watched the huge root become my third leg. I pulled a blade of grass from between my shoes and slowly, methodically, began to twist it into tiny knots, as if it were a piece of twine. I was waiting for him to begin.

Suddenly I felt his arm close around my shoulders. I started, jumping to my feet away from his touch. He looked at me reproachfully, as if something he wanted had been taken away. Slowly he rose and stood before me. The arm which he had extended now hung motionless by his side.

"Don't come near me!"

He did not seem to hear. He came closer until I could feel his breath upon my face. Then both his arms reached out to me, and I felt myself being pulled toward his chest. His arms had snared me, and I felt trapped, struggling to get free. I used the palms of my hands to try to push his body away from my own, but it was useless. My face was crushed into his left shoulder; I was stifled, but still I did not give up. I began to kick at him wildly, putting all the force of my weight and my hatred behind each blow, but his arms only drew me tighter. I was sure he would have to release me, yet he never did. I felt that I was stinking at marble.

"No!" The scream filled the cemetery and bounded off the graves. "No!" I repeated, less clearly this time, for I was beginning to swallow my tears. I felt my body collapse against his, and I should have fallen if I had not clung to him, for I was weak.

"Listen to me, Greg. I love you. You may not want me to; you may hate me for it; but I do love you. And I'm never going to let you go again. Never!"

"No!" I screamed until my lungs gave way.

"I left because I wanted to 'make it'. I felt I owed her that much. I know I should have written, but what could I have said but that I was broke? And I wanted to be a success for her — and for you. I turned out to be a failure. I failed myself and I failed you. Greg, I had to live with that for nine years. Then one day I decided not just to live with it, but to do something about it. I came back because I need your help to do it — and I need your love."

"You *chose* not to be here! You can't love me. And I can't love —" But my own tears silenced me.

"If you can't love me, Greg, then at least try to understand. I'm sorry. Dear God, you don't know how sorry I am. I wanted her to be proud of me; *I* wanted to provide for my family; I didn't want her parents' money. I wanted to earn my own and have some control over my life."

"I used to call you at night, and you didn't come. I can't love —"

"I'm sorry I wasn't there for you. But Greg, are you sorry you couldn't be there for me? It works both ways. God, I've wanted to hold you for nine years. I hoped maybe you'd forgive me, but now I know —"

His arms released me, and I staggered back. He continued.

"—I know now that's impossible." I stood paralyzed before him. He had given up, had failed himself again. He wanted my love after all these years, but he could not reach it. He had tried, and lost.

"All I ever wanted to do was to hold —" I felt my anger burst from my soul and spring into my mouth, and I would not let him finish.

"You're going to give up again, aren't you? You didn't think you could handle Mom's disappointment, so you ran away. Now that you're back, you're doing it again. You're running away from my love. I loved you once. You used to bring me here. Don't run away again. I—"

I choked on the words; they would not

come, but he saw what I was struggling to say.

"We liked it here, didn't we, Greg?"

"I love—"

"I wish we could start again. Maybe we could come here again like we used to. Remember when we saw a frog jumping across the lily pads, and how I caught it, but it slipped away? I guess I've never been good at holding on to things, have I? I couldn't hold onto a frog; how can I hold on to you?"

"No! I love you!" It had come at last.

I felt his strong arms fold around my body for a second time. I did not kick him or push him away; instead I buried my head into his chest, and cried.

"We'll come here again," I mumbled. Only the frog pond heard us. I bent down and plunged my hand beneath the cool water, picking out the leaf which had sunk to the bottom earlier.

"What's that, Greg?"

I held the soggy leaf before him. "My heart," I replied. "Let's go home."

He drew up beside me, and then, for the first time in nine years, we both went home.



I Wish He'd Smile

*I wish he'd smile
at me,
just for a while,
at me.
Or laugh with me,
so I could look
at him while he
chuckled away
with me.
Looking at him,
I am filled
with
Love. . . .Love?
Happiness!
I'm going to care for him
Forever
—Or until another
Smiles
at me.*

— Kristen Daly

Please Take Me As I Am

*Please take me as I am,
Accept me for being me.
Don't try to make changes,
Please just let me be.*

*I know I'm far from perfect,
That I won't deny,
I'll never reach perfection,
But I can only try.*

*I really want to please you,
How much you'll never know.
I work so hard to make you happy,
Hoping that my efforts show.*

*But you never seem satisfied,
With anything I do.
Nothing is ever good enough
To please the both of you.*

*And this so breaks my heart,
And leaves me very bitter.
Sometimes I feel like giving up,
But I am not a quitter.*

*Eventually, I do please you both,
Who mean the most to me,
But in so doing I am changed,
And lose my true identity.*

*This makes me more unhappy
Than I ever was before,
'Cause I no longer know who I am,
—I'm just not me anymore.*

*And if two people cannot love me,
For just being myself,
Then they don't really love me,
But love somebody else.*

— Lisa Bourgeois

Words Of Inspiration

The Only Way Up

*Neighbors wish you well in your future
endeavors and they laugh.
They appreciate that you have grasped their
concerns — their spells.
They feel in their hot view of blue blood
you're faltering —
and fanciful of tomorrow.
They're intrigued by your doubts
and they're happy,
joyously happy, for they're
fixed and stable,
and this is your genuine loss.
They show signs of pleasure,
But they're not satisfied yet.
You sense their secret encouragement and
you're correct.*

NO!

*You're not going to admit that your
brewing ideas
didn't work . . .
You're not! You just can't!
You look behind you and there is the Devil,
sitting cross-legged in his royal, wickered
chair. . .*

* * *

*The worst thing about these ironic farewells
is that
you know they're lying,
and your conscience can't defend your
misgivings.
You are at your highest,
the only direction you can go is down,
and you are ready and they are not.
I just cry.*

— Y. K. Kwong

*Walking through a clear blue morning,
Alone in a cold day dawning,
Looking for someone special,
But finding no such person there,
I think that I am so deceived;
But this is life as I perceive.*

*When I am down and lonesome, blue,
At such times I've lost my cool,
But I just think of good perceptions,
Neglecting all the deceptions.
I am then brought to reality,
And love life with sincerity.*

*And thus is the inspiration,
My own words of contribution,
When one is in hard depressions,
Think of all good attributions.*

— Victor Hom

If

*If I had you by my side to live or die
there'd be no reason for me to cry
If I had you as my friend to make my day
there'd be no reason for me to carry
on this way
If I had the fun and laughter with
you I had before
I would not be sad thinking about
you anymore
If I had the happiness which two
people can share
Maybe I wouldn't go crazy wishing
you were here
If I had seen the glory once more
in your eye
Come forth joy without a sigh
Only if my heart would be in place by then
Maybe we could be friends once again. . .*

— Indja Cheshire



The Robin

*I waited for him and thought of him
each bleak and dreary day,
when weak and watery sunlight made
both Earth and Heavens grey.
When rasping leaves raked the ground
in crazed, relentless play,
and any reasons to rejoice
the wind just whisked away.*

*I waited for him and watched for him
through crystal, brittle panes
hung with lace; my delicate cage
so gently held enchained—
me inside, inside confined,
as were my sweet refrains,
in icicle prisons of my heart
likewise kept contained.*

* * *

*He came today, chirping away,
as if he thought that he
had never left but ought to come
and set my heart-song free.
Carolling brightly, unaware
of what he brought to me,
In shrill delight with all his might
he piped spring's sweet decree.*

*He'll sing his song; I'll sing along,
My ruby-chested friend.
Soft melodies of Spring which prove
that winters always end.
My heart now loosed from choked confines
will sing its song with his:
Oh desolate days be now away—
—And hear it! Here it is!*

— Beth Nicholson

Best Wishes To the Class of 1982

—Anonymous

ITHAKA

As you set out for Ithaka
hope your road is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope your road is a long one.
May there be many summer mornings when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you enter harbors you're seeing for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind—
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to learn and go on learning from their scholars.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you're destined for.
But don't hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you're old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you've gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you wouldn't have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

PATRONS

John and Patricia Bench
Joseph Bonafede
Mr. and Mrs. William Bourgeois
Mr. and Mrs. David J. Carney
Mary Colvario
Mr. and Mrs. M.J. Concannon
Martine Mary Conneely
James and Carole Cornell
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